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ABSTRACT

A study of students' self-expressed test-taking strategies for reading comprehension tests in English as a second language (ESL) had as subjects 86 Hebrew-speaking university students in Israel. The students were given a reading comprehension test, half with open-ended questions and half with multiple choice. Half the responses were anonymous and half were signed. Then all students were asked 12 questions in Hebrew concerning the reading strategies they used during the exam. Results revealed that the students performed almost identically despite question type, but the open-ended questions were better measures of reading comprehension. The better students appeared to use contextual guessing for unknown words, while the weaker students were slowed by word-solving strategies, excessive use of dictionaries, and translating. Most subjects hesitated to skim and were unable to disregard unknown terms. The findings suggest that weak students need more individualized and inductive instruction if they are to learn how to verbalize their decoding methods and reading expectations and then how to acquire and apply the reading strategies in which they are deficient. The findings also suggest that all students should augment their vocabularies by memorization of basic terms. (MSE)

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TEST PERFORMANCE VIS A VIS TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES IN READING COMPREHENSION OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Research has been done on the relationship between students' test performance and the test-taking strategies they employ in the field of reading comprehension in English As A Second Language (ESL).

This project entailed asking students to explain how they take reading comprehension examinations in a foreign language while they were actually taking the examination.

Eighty-six university students, native or proficient speakers of Hebrew, in their first year of a two year E.S.L. program, were given thirteen open-ended or multiple-choice questions in a graded or non-graded situation. Twelve questions, posed in Hebrew, were designed to probe which reading strategies students use when being examined.

This research revealed that students perform almost identically when answering open-ended or multiple-choice items; however, the open-ended items proved to be the better testers of reading comprehension.

The better students appeared to be "main-line" readers who employed contextual guessing in deciphering the meaning of unknown words. At the same time, the weaker students got bogged down with "word-solving" strategies, an excessive use of dictionaries and translating. Most of the subjects hesitated to skim and were unable to ignore or disregard unknown terms.

For the very weak students, who must first learn how to verbalize their decoding methods and reading expectations and then how to acquire and apply the basic reading strategies in which they are deficient, more individualized or"inductive" instruction is suggested. All the subjects tested must augment their vocabularies by memorizing basic terms.

Increasing the amount of reading in L2 and consistently applying reading strategies once they have been mastered are necessary if "main-line" reading is to follow suit.

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INTRODUCTION

This research analyzes and correlates students' test performance with the test-taking strategies they employ in the field of reading comprehension of English as a Second Language.

Its purpose is to answer the following questions dealing with overall test performance, as well as with the use of test-taking strategies and their application.

1. Do students do better on open-ended or on multiple choice-type questions?
2. Do students do better in a graded or in a non-graded anonymous situation?
3. Do students apply the test-taking strategies and the language skills they are taught in the classroom to a test-taking situation?
4. Which reading strategies are used, and which are not used by the stronger and by the weaker students?
5. How could teachers of English as a Second Language more effectively approach their students, teaching materials and testing tasks?

THE LITERATURE

To date most information concerning students' reading strategies has been gathered via oral interviewing (Cohen et al., 1979; Cohen et Aphek, 1981; Connor, 1982; Dollerup et al., 1981; Fillmore, 1981; Hamburg and Spaan, 1981; Hosenfeld, 1977, 1979; Larson, 1981; Laufer and Sim, 1981). However, some research in this field has been done by employing written questionnaires in the students' native language (Roizen, 1983).

Regarding oral questioning, one may distinguish between "introspective" interviewing, that is questioning the students while they are reading or being tested and "retrospective" interviewing which involves questioning the students after they have completed the reading or testing task (Hosenfeld, 1977, p. 112).

Although such interviewing has provided a great deal of valuable data, it has several drawbacks. First of all, one must establish if the subjects are able to identify and articulate their test-taking strategies and problems (Larson, 1981, p. 1). Another drawback to oral interviewing is that its success or failure may depend on the "warmth and charm of the interviewer" (Fillmore, 1981, p. 257). In other words, one must take into account that the results of an interview are often influenced by "interpersonal" and "intrasituational" variables (Hosenfeld, 1979, p. 68).

In order to avoid the above obstacles, it may be necessary for interviewers to work with their subjects by having them "think aloud" during several practice sessions (Hosenfeld, 1977, p. 111). Then, after a routine is established, a successful interview may take place.

As for "retrospective" interviews, there are doubts concerning their reliability, as they are often incomplete (Hosenfeld, 1979, p. 68).

A reading strategy can be viewed as a technique which is comprised of two categories of operations: "main-line" reading and "word-solving" strategies (Hosenfeld, 1977, p. 111). Good readers generally employ the former, whereas poor readers get

bogged down with the latter.

By probing how people read and comprehend, it has been found that test takers often produce the right answers for the wrong reasons and vice-versa (Cohen, 1983, p. 2; Dollerup, 1981, p. 3). It has also been found that students reading a foreign language are sometimes more successful than are native speakers at answering questions correctly because of their more "local" reading. That is, they treat all material as being equally important and do not risk passing over details (Cohen et al., p. 559).

In addition to decoding processes, other factors which affect comprehension are one's motivation to read and one's familiarity with the subject matter.

> "...The task of the reader is to derive a discourse from the text. The extent to which this derivation will reconstitute the writer's discourse will depend on how far he corresponds in actuality to the interlocutor the writer has presupposed. He may not need, or may not want, to follow the course of interaction so painstakingly plotted by the writer on his behalf. He can take short cuts according to the state of his knowledge, or according to his purpose in reading" (Widdowson, 1980, p. 239).

Although a reader's background of a subject may enhance comprehension, it may also be a handicap if it influences a test taker to answer questions incorrectly (Dollerup, et al., 1981, p. 7).

The importance of teaching strategies for reading in L.2 and the extent to which they contribute to successful comprehension is being debated. It was found that "readers with higher L.2 competence and higher exposure to reading seem to display better reading performance in L.2 than readers with lower competence who received formal training in reading strategies". (Laufer and Sim, 1981, p. 10). On the other hand, when reading strategies were acquired via "inductive" instruction, reading comprehension, as well as interest in second language reading, greatly improved (Hosenfeld, 1979, p. 61). The need for educators to continue probing people's reading processes and to teach reading strategies in L.2 is supported by the comment that in order to obtain "insights into cognitive strategies to teach, teachers must find out about how learners go about solving problems in reading" (Cohen et al., 1979, p. 563).

Another aspect of the literature related to this research concerns the types of questions used to test reading comprehension.

Open-ended questions are classified as those which demand an overt response; however, since there is no dialogue or socialization involved when one is taking a written examination, such questions may be regarded as an unnatural imposition on the reader (Widdowson, 1978, p. 95-97).

Multiple-choice questions are also troublesome. "The learner is presented with a set of sentences and his first task is to comprehend them. If they are to reflect genuine possibilities of misunderstanding, then the difference between them is likely to be slight, and discrimination between them is likely to make considerable demands on the learner's comprehending skills. But this exercise in discrimination is not related to an understanding of the passage, but is imposed on the learner as a separate comprehending task". (Widdowson, 1978, p. 98).

Bearing these criticisms in mind, one may conclude that all testing situations are artificial as "we are not, in normal circumstances, required to submit ourselves to interrogation after having read something, knowing at the same time that the person putting the question already knows the answer." (Widdowson, 1978, p. 96).

Nevertheless, unless oral examinations replace them, the traditional types of tests will continue to be used to test reading comprehension. In addition to the handicap pointed out by Widdowson, one must also consider that when writing multiple-choice questions teachers often "...choose distractors on the basis of intuition and teachers' intuitions about what will 'distract' students away from the correct answer are not always accurate". (Cohen, 1980, p. 20). The obvious advantage of open-ended questions is that "students are not required to read and interpret alternate choices" (Cohen, 1980, p. 19).

THE SUBJECTS

The subjects were eighty-six students enrolled in their first year of studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. They participated in a two year English program due to their low scores on the English section of the university's psychometric examination.

Much of the classroom instruction was given frontally or "deductively" (Hosenfeld, 1979, p. 61). A great deal of emphasis was also put on small group work. In addition, students were given the opportunity to receive private or "inductive" instruction (Hosenfeld, 1979, p. 61) by attending optional weekly tutorials.

Half of the students were given multiple-choice questions while the others were given open-ended questions. (appendix ii, iii). The examination papers were distributed in alternating order, in order to minimize the possibility of cheating.

Likewise, fifty percent of the subjects were asked to write their names on their papers as their grades would be recorded; the others were given the examination anonymously, as their scores were not to affect their class grades.

Upon completing the reading comprehension examination, the students answered a series of questions in Hebrew concerning their reading strategies. These questions were the same for everyone. The examination instructions were also written in Hebrew. The corrected papers were returned to the students, reviewed in small groups, and discussed in class.

DATA

All data were computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency runs were done for each of the following tests:

-graded multiple-choice questions
-non-graded multiple-choice questions
-graded open-ended questions
-non-graded open-ended questions.

Frequency runs were also done for the strategy questions which accompanied each of the above tests. All frequencies were adjusted when values were missing.

In addition to the above, the following were also compiled: test reliability, item reliabilities, analysis of variance, Pearson correlation coefficients, covariance and correlation matrices.

For the most part, Hebrew was the native language of these students and English was their second language. Nevertheless, for at least twenty-five per cent of the subjects, Arabic was the first language, Hebrew the second and English the third. There were also a few students who were new immigrants to Israel.

THE TEST

The text (appendix i) for the reading comprehension was followed by thirteen comprehension questions, either multiple-choice or open-ended, as well as a series of questions concerning test-taking strategies. The latter were posed in Hebrew. (appendices ii-iv).

METHOD

Prior to the administration of the tests the subjects attended classes for approximately five months. Although they did not all have the same instructor, their instruction was very similar and they all used the same texts and workbooks. During this time a great deal of emphasis was put on the following:

Reading Strategies

Previewing articles
Skimming
Paying attention to titles and subtitles
Contextual guessing
Ignoring unknown and unimportant words and phrases
Reading for main idea and finding supportive facts

Language skills

Recognizing structures such as cause and effect, comparison and contrast, chronology etc.
Dictionary skills
Grammar - identification of the parts of speech and their roles in sentences

Test-taking Techniques

Reading and following instructions
Answering questions accurately and briefly

(appendix vi)

Similarities and differences between the various examinations

The test results on the four sets of examinations: graded - multiple-choice, graded -open-ended, non-graded - multiple-choice and non-graded open-ended were very similar. Hence the question type did not influence the scores.
(appendices v, viii)

Nevertheless, on six out of thirteen items the students performed better on open-ended questions, whereas on the other seven they performed better on the multiple-choice items. (appendix ix) One should note that the scores on the text taken in a non-graded situation were slightly higher than those in a graded situation. (appendices v, viii).

Average absolute correlation between questions by type and correlations between questions and scores

There was a high correlation between all of the cause and effect questions, as well as between the cause and effect questions and the vocabulary items. The correlation between the cause and effect questions and the complex questions was also significant. (appendix x)

The average absolute correlation between the other questions of the same type were insignificant. (appendix x) It is interesting to note that the two questions on anaphora were the only ones which produced significant correlations with score.

Item difficulty

An item analysis revealed that most of the questions discriminated satisfactorily. However, multiple-choice items one, three, five and nine proved to be too easy. The open-ended questions appeared to be better discriminators with the exception of questions five and eleven. (appendix ix)

Observing the combined results of graded and non-graded multiple-choice tests one notes that one distractor was never chosen on six of the items, and on one item even two distractors were not picked. (appendix xi) On four other questions there was a distractor which was chosen by only one subject.

Written answers to strategy questions

The answers to two of the strategy questions were not computed or included in the statistical data, as an insignificant number of subjects answered them. Nevertheless, the

FINDINGS

Correlation of scores with strategies

It was found that the better students read the entire passage before reading and answering the questions, that they translated the least and that they figured out the meanings of unknown words by using contextual guessing. They were able to answer some of the questions without reading the text because of their background knowledge of the subject matter.

The students with poor grades translated a great deal and depended on their dictionaries for translating and for finding the meaning of unknown words (see appendix vii). Eight percent of the subjects who responded reported that they translated the entire article.

Frequently used strategies

Sixty-nine percent of those who answered claimed that they used contextual guessing for deciphering the meanings of unknown words. The same percentage of students reported that they translated a small part of the article. Ninety-four percent of the subjects used a dictionary during the exam and fifty-five percent of the dictionary users looked up from one to five words.

Unused or little used strategies

Only ten percent of the subjects said that they skimmed the article before reading it in detail. No one reported ignoring terms in the text when they came across unknown words.

Three percent of the subjects looked up fifteen or more words in the dictionary.

Fourteen percent of the subjects who answered open-ended questions and twenty-eight percent of those who answered multiple-choice items resorted to guessing when they could not locate an answer in the text.

Correlations between strategies

The statistics revealed that the students who looked up more than ten words in the dictionary were those who employed it as a translating tool.

On the other hand, those who sporadically used the dictionary were also those who were able to answer some of the questions without referring to the text, and were able to decipher the meaning of unknown words via contextual guessing

that no credit was given for partially correct answers. They also claimed that when they did not know an answer they had to leave it blank and hence they felt disadvantaged in comparison to those who answered the multiple-choice questions and were able to guess under the same circumstances.

Although these objections are "psychologically" legitimate, they are not supported by the test-results which showed that question-type did not influence scores.

On the other hand, since it is true that multiple-choice questions lend themselves to guessing and since these guesses often result in the correct answer for the wrong reason (Cohen, 1983; Dollerup, 1981), open-ended questions more accurately test students' comprehension.

Correlation of score with strategies

The fact that the better students read the entire text before answering the questions indicates that these "main-line" readers are able to retain information as well as comprehend it. Their ability to answer some questions without necessarily having read the article allows one to presume that their background knowledge is due to extensive reading in L.1. This should not be underestimated, as it exercizes the mind in developing strategies in any language.

Reading in L.2, however, increases one's ability to "visualize" a second language, especially when the characters of the alphabet of L.2 or L.3 are not the same as those of L.1. Visualising an alphabet which differs from the one acquired during childhood is a task in itself.

The abilities to read a text rapidly and/or scan line by line or paragraph by paragraph instead of deciphering it letter by letter or word by word, are essential strategies that can only be acquired by increasing exposure to L.2.

The failures had neither the self-confidence nor the capacity to employ contextual guessing when faced with unfamiliar vocabulary. Instead they used the dictionary exclusively as a translation-tool. There is a remarkable correlation between the failures, the general low level of this student-population and the overuse (more than ninety percent) of dictionaries (appendix vi).

written responses to these questions are of interest and are recorded herein. Some multiple-choice questions were considered "unfair" since the distractors were too similar and/or all partially correct. Concerning the open-ended question (number thirteen) which called for a synonym for "but", two students objected: one claiming that the question was not clearly stated, the other complaining that one had to have an idiomatic knowledge of English to be able to answer it.

DISCUSSION

The Subjects

In 1979 fifteen students were enrolled in the two year English program at Hebrew University. By 1983 this number reached ninety. This large annual increase in the number of students with an insufficient background in English justifies research concerning these students. It appears necessary to adjust to the new reality and to improve the existing curriculum, as well as the teaching and testing methodologies used for this particular level.

On the other hand, one may wish to have more advanced students taking a similar text, in order to determine if some of the conclusions of this research are not distorted by the extreme weakness of the subjects.

Text and Method

A short text and a limited number of questions were necessary to enable the subjects to comfortably complete the reading and the answering of both the comprehension and strategy questions within one hour.

The text had been pretested (Roizen, 1983) and found satisfactory in its level of difficulty, format and length.

The strategy questions were written in Hebrew in order to avoid any problems with reading comprehension, and in order to reach the largest number of subjects in a minimal timespan. This excluded the personal impact of oral interviewing and lent itself to the use of computerised statistical methods.

The answers to the strategy questions were complemented by informal post-test classroom sessions. At this time, some of the subjects who answered the open-ended questions complained

attempted is to train students who have mastered the application of specific strategies, to assist the instructor. This could be done in two or three sessions. These "assistants" could then take over small groups while being monitored by the instructor. The success of such a method, however, depends upon the willingness of the potential assistants to invest their time and energy in such an endeavor.

When testing, teachers may pose ~~the~~ questions which oblige the students to skim the article.

Correlations between Strategies

The correlation between strategies show once more that dictionaries are being used as translation-tools. To remedy this, in addition to what has already been discussed and proposed, more time should be spent using monolingual dictionaries of the Thesaurus type and exercizing contextual guessing.

Open-ended versus Multiple-choice items

In a previous research (Roizen, 1983, p. 6), the author came to the conclusion that students do better on open-ended items than on the multiple-choice questions. This research, however, shows that the item type had no bearing on the scores. (appendix viii). On the other hand, the deficiencies of the multiple-choice type items, pointed out in the literature, as well as those shown in the item-analysis (appendix xi) demonstrate that open-ended questions are more effective. Furthermore, open-ended items are easier to formulate than are multiple-choice ones, which lend themselves to guessing. A carefully worked-out key makes an open-ended question examination reliable.

However, teachers should also be open to the fact that students' interpretations may occasionally result in unanticipated, but acceptable answers.

An illustration of this is item thirteen which asks for an alternative to the term "but" in line 50. On the multiple-choice item the only possible right answer was "however". On the open-ended item one student replied with the word "unfortunately". Although this answer was not anticipated, it was accepted as it did not alter the meaning of the sentence.

It is therefore highly regrettable that Hebrew University students are allowed to use bilingual dictionaries when taking ESL examinations, simply because they are accustomed to doing so in their respective faculties. The use of monolingual dictionaries instead, or none at all, would encourage and no doubt force the students to employ contextual guessing and ignore unknown and unimportant words.

Training students by asking them to underline the words they sense are unimportant and by having them compare their lists in small groups would also reduce this dependence on dictionaries.

Another means of diminishing this excessive usage of dictionaries would be to demand that pertinent and "topical" vocabulary be memorized. Although this method is pedagogically unpopular among instructors today, it would certainly increase vocabulary and build their self confidence when reading in L.2.

Unused or little used strategies

When discussing the test in small groups the students said that they recognised the strategies of skimming and paying attention to titles or subtitles as being helpful in the classroom, however they admitted that they do not automatically employ these skills when their reading is not being directed. Some people claimed that since they were never taught such strategies in L.1 they simply do not feel comfortable using them. For the others the anxiety created by the test situation prevented them from using the skills acquired in the classroom. Their only concerns were reading for detail and finishing the task in time.

In order to more accurately determine if it is only this particular population which fails to skim, it would be worthwhile to pose the same strategy-questions to more advance students, and also to investigate the matter in L.1. Telling students to work harder is not the answer (Hosenfeld, 1979, p. 67); however, "inductive instruction" may be. Seven individual sessions was what it took to considerably improve "Cindy's" ability and confidence to decode in L.2 (Hosenfeld, 1979, 64).

Such instruction would undoubtably be the ideal solution. However, the task becomes monumental when an instructor has two or three classes with thirty students in each. What may well be

CONCLUSIONS

This research revealed that students perform almost identically when answering open-ended or multiple-choice items, however open-ended items proved to be the better testers of reading comprehension. The better students appeared to be "main-line" readers, who employed contextual guessing in deciphering the meaning of unknown words. At the same time the weaker students got bogged down with "word-solving strategies", an excessive use of dictionaries and translating. Most subjects hesitated to skim and were unable to ignore or disregard unknown terms.

The very weak students definitely need more individualized or "inductive" instruction. This is necessary as they must first learn how to verbalize decoding methods and reading expectations and then how to acquire and apply the basic reading strategies in which they are deficient.

This entire population must increase its vocabulary by memorizing basic terms and must become more proficient at contextual guessing. This can be achieved by increasing the amount of reading in L.2, and by consistently applying reading strategies once they have been mastered. "Main-line" reading, motivation to read and higher examination scores will follow suit.

Graded versus non-graded exams

The slightly higher scores on the non-graded exams may indicate that anxiety over grades has a negative influence on performance.

Average Absolute correlations between questions by Type

The high average absolute correlations between some of the questions by type indicate the effectiveness of classroom instruction as a great deal of time was spent working on cause and effect structures and anaphora. At the same time the low correlations may be due to the fact that some questions are either not properly categorized or belong to more than one category. (e.g. item 10 being a complex question as well as a cause-and-effect type question) (appendix vi).

Correlation between Question and Score

The high correlation between anaphora type questions and score demonstrates that the better students are "main-line" readers who retain information and comprehend well.

Appendix i

THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

Three babies born every second....

There are over 3,800 million people in the world today, and the total is increasing at the rate of more than 76 million a year. United Nations experts have calculated that it could be more than 7,000 million by the end of this century.

The population is growing more quickly in some parts of the world than others. The continents with the fastest growth rates are Latin America (2.9 per cent). Asia comes third (2.1 per cent) but because its present population is so large it is there that by far the greatest number of people will be added by the end of the century.

What has caused the population explosion?

The main reason is not so much a rise in birth rates as a fall in death rates as a result of improvements in public health services and medical care. Many more babies now survive infancy, grow up and become parents, and many more adults are living into old age so that populations are being added to at both ends. In Europe and America the death rate began to fall much later and the birth rate has only recently begun to fall.

The problems facing the developing countries

"The rich get richer and the poor get babies...."

This sudden increase in the population of the developing countries has come at a difficult time. Even if their population had not grown so fast they would have been facing a desperate struggle to bring the standard of their people up to the point at which there was enough food, housing, education, medical care and employment for everyone to have a reasonable life. The poor countries are having to run faster and faster in their economic activity in order to stay in the same place, and the gap in wealth between rich and poor countries grows wider every year.

Too little food..

The most pressing problem created by the rapid increase in population is a shortage of food. More mouths have to be fed every year, and yet a high proportion of the existing population are not getting enough of the right kind of food. Over the past

Appendix i

(Continuation)

two years the total amount of food has decreased, and of course the total amount of food per person has decreased even more sharply.

Too many people

More and more of the babies born in developing countries have been surviving infancy and now nearly half the people living in those countries are under the age of 15. The adults have to work harder than ever to provide for the needs of the children, who cannot contribute to the economy until they are older. There is a shortage of schools and teachers, and there are not enough hospitals, doctors and nurses. Farming land is becoming scarce so country people are moving into the towns and cities in hope of finding a better standard of living. But the cities have not been able to provide housing, and the newcomers live in crowded slums. Finally, there are too few jobs and unemployment leads to further poverty.

Appendix ii

1. What is the result of three babies being born every second?

_____

2. Line 3 - "the total" refers to_____

3. When the author speaks of Latin America, Africa and Asia in paragraph 2, he is comparing the _____ in these countries. (Fill in the blank with the appropriate word(s))

4. Which continent will have the largest population by the year 2000? _____

5. (Complete the following statement)
Throughout the world, fewer people are dying and more infants are living because of

_____

6. (line 17) When the author speaks of both ends he is referring to _____

7. (Circle your answer and explain why)
True or False - The standard of living in the developing countries is improving. _____

8. According to paragraph 4, lines 24-33, what would the goal of the developing countries be? (answer in 5 - 8 words)

_____

9. (Complete this statement) Due to the population explosion the most urgent world problem is _____

_____

10. Give at least 2 reasons to explain why there is a world food shortage-

a. _____

b. _____

11. (Complete this statement) Adults in the developing countries have to work harder and harder because _____

_____

12. Two <u>institutions</u> which are lacking in number in the developing countries are _____ and _____

13. Line 50 - the word "but" could be replaced by the word_____.

Appendix iii

1. The effect of three babies being born every minute is

   a. the world population is stable
   b. fewer people are dying every year
   c. the world population is increasing by 76,000,000 yearly
   d. there will soon be more people in Africa than in Asia

2. line 3 - "the total" refers to

   a. the rate of population growth
   b. seventy-six thousand million people
   c. the present world population
   d. the predicted population for the year 2000

3. When the author speaks of Latin America, Africa and Asia in paragraph 2, he is comparing the_____in these countries.

   a. present populations b. death rates
   c. growth rates d. greatest people

4. The continent that will have the largest population by the year 2000 is

   a. Asia b. Africa c. South America d. North America

5. Throughout the world, fewer people are dying and more are living because

   a. living standards have improved everywhere
   b. there are more people than in the past
   c. people are getting richer and eating better
   d. health services and medical care have improved

6. line 17 - When the author speaks of "both ends" he is referring to

   a. infants and old people b. parents and children
   c. birth and death rates d. Europe and America

7. The standard of living in the developing countries is

   a. improving b. worsening c. satisfactory d. reasonable

8. According to paragraph 4, lines 24-30, the goal of the developing countries should be to

   a. maintain their present economic situation
   b. obtain a reasonable life style for everyone
   c. increase the gap between rich and poor
   d. increase their populations every year

9. Due to the population explosion the most urgent world problem is the lack of

   a. housing b. food c. education d. hospitals

Appendix iii

(continued)

10. There is a world food shortage because

    a. a high proportion of the population isn't eating the right kind of food
    b. there are more people and less food than in the past
    c. many people have willingly decreased the amount of food they eat
    d. the amount of food in the world has increased sharply

11. Adults in developing countries are having to work harder and harder because

    a. their children no longer take care of them
    b. so many children under the age of 15 are working
    c. they are enjoying a high standard of living
    d. their children are numerous and too young to work

12. Two institutions which are lacking in number in the developing countries are

    a. nurses and teachers b. farms and houses
    c. land and jobs d. schools and hospitals

13. The word "but" could be replaced by the word

    a. therefore b. although c. however d. nevertheless

Appendix iv - The Strategy Questions

Throughout the appendix, the strategies will be to the left of each question. The students were instructed to answer questions 1-8 with regards to their behavior in all testing situations. Therefore, their responses reflect a self-report. Questions 9-12 were asked in regards to this examination only and therefore the responses reflect self-observation.

Abbreviated code	Strategy Question and Answer
1. Read Article	1. Do you read the entire article prior to reading the questions? a. always b. usually c. sometimes d. rarely e. never
2. Read Questions	2. Do you read the questions prior to reading the article? a. always b. usually c. sometimes d. rarely e. never
3. Read Titles	3. Do you pay attention to the titles and subtitles when they exist? a. always b. usually c. sometimes d. rarely e. never
4. Skim	4. Do you skim the article before reading it in detail? a. always b. usually c. sometimes d. rarely e. never
5. Matching	5. Do you try to answer questions by matching words and sentences used in them with the words and sentences used in the text? a. always b. usually c. sometimes d. rarely e. never
6. Translation	6. Do you translate? a. yes b. no

Appendix iv
(continued)

7. Amount translated	7. If you translate, do you translate- a. all of the article b. a large part of the article c. a small part of the article
8. Unknown words	8. When you encounter words you do not know do you- a. look them up in the dictionary b. try to understand them from context c. ignore them
9. Dictionary usage	9. Did you use a dictionary? a. yes b. no
10. Amount of dictionary usage	10. If you used a dictionary, approximately how many words did you look up? a. 1-5 b. 5-10 c. 10-15 d. 15-20 e. more than 20
11.* No Read Text	11. How many questions were you able to answer without reading the text? a. none b. 1 or 2 c. a few d. most
12. Why questions-no text?	12. If you were able to answer questions without reading the text, was it because- a. the questions were easy b. the answers were common sense c. the subject matter was familiar and I could answer them from my own knowledge.

* Note. Strategy Question N° 11 (No Read Text) may be interpreted as more of a background question than a strategy question as it provides descriptive information. It demonstrates that the text was sufficiently difficult for the students even though they were able to answer some questions without reading the article.

Appendix iv
(continued)

The following strategy questions were not computed by the SPSS package because an insignificant number of people answered them or because they required written answers.

13. Do you guess at the answers to questions when you do not know them?

    a. yes b. no

14. If you guessed at the answers, circle the number(s) of the questions to which you guessed the answers.

    a.1 b.2 c.3 d.4 e.5 f.6 g,7 h.8 i.9 j.10 k.11 l.12 m.13

15. If you guessed at the answers to questions, explain why you guessed.

    _____

16. Circle the number(s) of any question(s) which you felt were unfair.

    a.1 b.2 c.3 d.4 e.5 f.6 g.7 h.8 i.9 j.10 k.11 l.12 m.13

17. If you thought any of the questions were unfair explain why.

    _____

Appendix v

Score Frequencies by Group

Score %	Group 1 graded open-ended	Group 2 graded multiple-choice	Group 3 non-graded multiple-choice	Group 4 non-graded open-ended
7	-	-	-	-
15	1	-	1	2
30	-	-	-	-
38	1	1	-	-
46	3	2	2	1
53	2	3	1	1
61	2	4	2	3
69	3	2	1	3
76	5	3	4	2
84	2	4	7	4
92	2	1	3	2
100	2	1	1	1
Total number of people	23	21	23	19
Mean	68.2	69.5	70.0	72

The one way analysis of variance produced a nonsignificant ratio (.160).

Appendix vi

Correlations Between Strategies

Strategy	Strategy	P	r
Amount Dictionary	Unknown words	.001	-.47
No read text	Unknown words	.002	.35
No read text	Amount Dictionary Usage	.008	.30

Classification of the Questions by Type

1. Cause and Effect (e.g. items 1, 5, 9, 11)

Questions where the terms "result", "because of", "due to", and "because" clearly establish a cause and effect structure.

2. Anaphora (e.g. items 2 and 6)

Questions where reference to information previously mentioned in the text is required.

3. Detail or Fact Finding (e.g. items 4 and 8)

Demand pinpointing specific information from the text.

4. Complex questions (e.g. items 10 and 12)

Call for more than one answer (no credit for partially correct answers).

5. Vocabulary (e.g. open-ended items 7 and 13)

Demand focusing on the understanding of one specific word ("improving" in question 7 and "but" in question 13).

Appendix vii

Significant Correlations between questions and score

Question Number	Question Type	P	r
6	Anaphora	.001	.34
2	Anaphora	.072	.24

Appendix viii

Significance of question type and grading procedure on text score.

There was no significant difference ($p < .9230$) due to question type and grading.

Analysis of Variance

Variable Score % by group Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	3	194.3324	64.7775	.160	.9230
Within Groups	82	33220.4192	405.1271		
Total	85	33414.7516			

Group Mean

Group 1 (graded open-ended)	Group 2 (graded multiple-choice)	Group 3 non-graded multiple-choice)	Group 4 non-graded open-ended
68.2	68.5	70.0	72.0

* Since the analysis of variance produced no significant difference, it is feasible to consider the reliability for all four tests as one unit. ($P < .9230$)

Appendix ix

Percentages of Correct Answers According to Question Type

Number of Question on the examination	Percentage of Correct Open-ended questions	Percentage of correct multiple-choice questions
1	82	<u>91</u>
2	<u>62</u>	39
3	79	<u>88</u>
4	70	<u>76</u>
5	<u>94</u>	89
6	<u>72</u>	58
7	54	<u>63</u>
8	<u>80</u>	79
9	72	<u>98</u>
10	42	<u>52</u>
11	<u>89</u>	82
12	<u>69</u>	60
13	38	<u>55</u>

The actual text questions can be found in appendices i-iii

The underlined number is the higher percentage of correct answers for each question.

Appendix x

Average Absolute Correlations Between Questions By Type

	Cause and Effect	Anaphora	Detail Direct Question	Vocabulary	Complex Question
Cause and Effect	.76	.50	.38	.70	.62
Anaphora		.33	.30	.29	.35
Detail or Direct Question			-.11	.34	.32
Vocabulary Question				.47	.05
Complex Questions					.45

Question type	Question Number on exam
Cause and Effect	1, 5, 9, 11
Anaphora	2, 6
Detail	4, 8
Vocabulary	7, 13
Complex questions (those having more than one answer)	10, 12

Appendix xi

Distractors which were not chosen on Multiple Choice Items

Multiple-choice question number	distractor(s) not chosen
1	a
2	d
3	b
4	b
6	d
8	d
9	a,c

(The multiple choice question can be found in appendix iii)

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